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INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 001124

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STATE FOR AF/SPG, PRM, AND ALSO PASS USAID/W  
USAID FOR DCHA SUDAN TEAM, AFR/SP  
NAIROBI FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA, USAID/REDSO, USAID/SFO AND FAS  
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH  
NSC FOR PMARCHAM, MMAGAN, AND TSHORTLEY  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
USUN FOR TMALY  
BRUSSELS FOR PBROWN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EAID PREF PGOV PHUM SOCI UN SU

SUBJECT: SUDAN - DISASTER DECLARATION FOR FLOODING IN SUDAN

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¶1. Summary: This cable declares a disaster due to flooding in Sudan and requests U.S. Government (USG) emergency assistance for those in need. Unseasonably heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding since late June have affected hundreds of thousands people in Khartoum, Northern Kordofan, White Nile, Kassala, Red Sea, Gezira, Sennar, and Blue Nile states in northern Sudan, according to Government of National Unity (GNU) officials and humanitarian organizations. Exact numbers of damaged and destroyed houses, displaced individuals, and deaths remain difficult to ascertain, as many flood-affected areas are still unreachable. Assessments are ongoing. To date, the U.N. and partners have distributed supplies to 111,000 flood-affected people. As of July 19, the most-affected areas are Northern Kordofan, Khartoum, and Kassala states. The USG has been in contact with the GNU, U.N. agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to coordinate a response for flood-affected communities. In lieu of requesting the Ambassador's Authority funds of USD 50,000, post understands that USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) intends to provide USD 300,000 to the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) for distribution of emergency relief supplies in flood-affected areas. Post concurs with this decision and additional assistance will be requested of USAID/OFDA if needed. End summary.

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Current Situation  
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¶2. Water levels along the Blue Nile River and the Gash River continue to rise to levels that threaten further flooding in the coming weeks. The current flooding began a month earlier than the seasonal flooding in 2006. Many agencies fear that the flood season will be prolonged and damages in 2007 will exceed those in 2006. Relief agencies and local authorities have not yet been able to access and assess all flood-affected areas, but plan to do so in the coming weeks.

¶3. Khartoum State: In the Khartoum area, heavy rainfall since July 7 has destroyed between 6,300 and 6,800 houses and affected approximately 12,650 households, according to USAID, NGOs, and government officials. USAID partner CARE and other NGOs have distributed relief supplies to more than 5,000 families in Jebel Aulia and Mayo internally displaced person (IDP) camps in Khartoum. Humanitarian agencies have requested that the GNU clear blocked channels in the camps to open drainage to prevent additional flooding and mitigate the spread of waterborne diseases. On July

18, USAID staff visited Khartoum North and reported that the state and local government agencies have done an excellent job of meeting needs following flooding in low-lying rural areas.

¶ 14. Northern Kordofan State: Northern Kordofan State is currently among the most-affected areas due to excessive flooding caused by heavy rainfall. According to the U.N. Joint Logistics Center (UNJLC) and UNICEF, heavy rains on July 7 affected an estimated 12,000 households in the state, including El Obeid, a major logistics hub for the humanitarian operation in Sudan. UNJLC and UNICEF cautioned that 12,000 is an estimated planning figure only, and that many affected areas remain inaccessible, making it difficult to report on damaged or destroyed homes. As of July 14, some villages remained inaccessible by road and were unable to communicate using telephone or radio. A joint U.N., NGO, and GNU Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) committee has been established to coordinate flood response. As of July 14, the Northern Kordofan State Government claimed to have distributed 1,000 sacks of 90 kg sorghum per locality, as well as 800 tents, 5,700 plastic sheets and 500 mosquito nets for the six localities. However, no independent sources can confirm that such assistance has been provided. The Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRC) distributed 110 tents, 500 plastic sheets, and 425 blankets in different locations. U.N. agencies and NGOs plan to distribute relief supplies in the coming days.

¶ 15. Kassala State: According to the U.N. Resident Coordinator's Office, flooding of the Gash River has affected more than 16,345 households in Kassala State. The most-affected area is currently New Halfa, west of Kassala town, where 3,090 households have experienced flood-related damage. NGOs and U.N. agencies have mobilized to provide sufficient support to affected areas, including providing assistance by boat to the town of Aroma. (Note: Flood waters have receded from Aroma. An evacuation of the entire town had been considered earlier in July. End note.)

¶ 16. Blue Nile, Red Sea, Gezira, and Sennar States: U.N. agencies,

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NGOs, and local officials report varying levels of damage in Blue Nile State from flooding of the Blue Nile River. According to information compiled by the U.N. Resident Coordinator's Office, 562 households have been affected; however, local officials informed the U.N. World Health Organization that 2,265 households were affected. While various sources anecdotally report that flooding has affected Red Sea, Gezira, and Sennar states, to date no information is available on these areas.

¶ 17. White Nile State: According to USAID partner Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), heavy rains and flooding since June 30 have affected more than 2,500 households in Kosti, Rabak, and Tendelti towns in White Nile State. On July 2, ADRA, Fellowship for African Relief, the GNU HAC, and SRC conducted a house-to-house assessment. Nearly 1,600 houses were destroyed, and nearly 1,000 additional homes sustained damage. Three bridges collapsed in Rabak. Stagnant water in homes, yards, and roads remains a pressing issue. ADRA and FAR are distributing water containers, shelter materials, sleeping mats, and kitchen supplies to more than 850 households. UNICEF provided 1,000 mosquito nets and enough soap for 1,000 families to the White Nile State Ministry of Health. The GNU HAC reportedly is providing 9 MT of food. Other humanitarian needs include mosquito nets, plastic sheeting, digging tools for stagnant water drainage, sprayers and insecticides, and essential drugs.

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Humanitarian Response  
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¶ 18. The U.N. Resident Coordinator's Office is coordinating the flood response for U.N. agencies and NGOs. In accessible areas, relief agencies have mobilized to provide supplies such as water containers, blankets, and plastic sheeting, in addition to emergency food rations. In response to flooding countrywide, the U.N. plans to provide USD 1.5 million from the Common Humanitarian Fund for Sudan and an unspecified amount from the global U.N. Central Emergency Response Fund, in addition to releasing an emergency

appeal for flood response.

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GNU Response  
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¶9. The GNU HAC is coordinating the national response. State-level emergency committees are coordinating flood response efforts, including dissemination of information on affected areas, monitoring water levels, draining water, and providing relief supplies to affected populations. The GNU has estimated that as many as 1 million people could be affected by flooding in the coming weeks. (Comment: USAID staff note that the estimate does not appear to be based on assessments or other reliable data. UNJLC has already distributed supplies to 111,000 people countrywide, and that number is expected to climb to 185,000 after distributions in El Obeid in the coming days. End comment.)

¶10. A recent Sudan Vision article reported that communities at risk were not receiving or heeding flood early-warning messages from the government. However, the GNU is communicating early-warning information about water levels and rainfall forecasts to the humanitarian community via a newsletter. In recent years, USAID/OFDA has helped strengthen Sudanese early-warning efforts. In 2004 USAID/OFDA deployed a hydrometeorological hazard advisor to evaluate flood mitigation options in the Gash River Basin. In 2005 USAID/OFDA held a workshop with the U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and the University of Khartoum Engineering Department to train water resource managers.

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USG Response  
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¶11. Charge d'Affaires Alberto Fernandez has determined that the flooding in Sudan meets the necessary criteria for the USD 300,000 to be released: 1) A flood disaster exists in Sudan; 2) The GNU does not object to USG providing emergency assistance; and 3) Such assistance is in the USG's interest.

¶12. Embassy Khartoum, USAID/Sudan, and USAID/OFDA are coordinating an emergency response. USAID/OFDA has a team on the ground in Khartoum overseeing daily coordination and communication of the evolving situation, including attending GNU meetings, conducting assessments, and coordinating flood response activities with U.N.

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agencies and NGOs.

¶13. In consultation with the USAID/OFDA team in Khartoum, post understands that USAID/OFDA intends to provide UNICEF with USD 300,000 for the provision of emergency relief supplies. Post concurs with this decision and does not request the USD 50,000 in Ambassador's Authority funds at this time. The grant to UNICEF will be processed by USAID/Washington.

¶14. USAID/OFDA plans to assess damage in Khartoum IDP camps, Northern Kordofan State, and Kassala State in the coming weeks. USAID/Sudan will continue to monitor the situation as the rainy season progresses.

FERNANDEZ